

THE TIMES TURNS FOUR!

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



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Volume V, Number 1

April 2014

Selectmen Get a Special Delivery

BUILDINGS COMMITTEE DELIVERS THE BAD NEWS

By Ron Bernard

The latest buzzword heard in government and industry meetings is “deliverables,” which refers to project status reports. One of these deliverables – a dose of reality about the dire condition of Town facilities – was presented to the Sandisfield Select Board by the Strategic Planning Committee on March 10.

Chair Kathy Jacobs wasted no time in stating the bottom line. “We are here to consider Bryarly’s (engineering consultants) final report,” she said.

“Basically, even if we spend \$1.2 million on repairs (to three town buildings) just to be Code compliant, the Town will be no better off. And we’ll still be 10,000 sq. ft. short of space to meet

current needs much less any allowance for future growth.”

This sobering assessment certainly commanded the attention of the Board and the small number of residents who have been following the committee’s work.

The facilities in question include the Old Town Hall at West New Boston, the Town Hall Annex, a former school building which since 1999 has served as municipal offices, and the public library, both on Sandisfield Road. According to the committee, the appraised value of Town buildings and land is about \$580,000 while the estimated cost of repairs to meet *Cont’d p.2*



Joyce’s Trading Post Closer to Reality

SELECT BOARD VOTES YES ON CONVENIENCE STORE

By Sandy Parisky and Bill Price

Plans and documents for a new convenience store and fueling station, formally filed with the town earlier this year by Chandru and Kim Paspuletti, were unanimously approved by the Select Board at a public meeting held at the Town Hall Annex last month. With the Board’s vote to approve the special permits required by the town’s zoning bylaws, the Paspuletti’s breathed a sigh of relief.

About 30 people attended the meeting, which included a presentation, questions, and lively discussion before the Board approved plans to build Joyce’s Trading Post on a 3-acre site on Route 8 next to MJ Tuckers. Kim Paspuletti presented the plans she and her husband, Chandru, have been developing *Cont’d p.5*

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The Party Line

By Jo Garfield



When my father bought our place on a remote dirt road in Sandisfield – remote even for a town full of remote dirt roads – it was 1938 and I was seven. The unnamed road was later called Fox Road, though I don’t know why, since I never once saw a fox on or near it.

My Long Island-based parents bought the storybook white house with green shutters and many wooded acres as a weekend place for us, but a permanent home for my mother’s sister, her husband – a city boy with farming *Cont’d p.7*

SELECTMEN GET SPECIAL DELIVERY

Cont'd from p.1

code is approximately \$1.2 million, twice the current valuation.

The list of deficiencies at every location is long. There is special concern about major structural components and systems including septic, roofs, and heating and plumbing. Bryarly also indicated there are signs that one of the foundations may be compromised. If confirmed by a separate analysis (not budgeted), the scope of the work could be significantly greater.

The aggregate repairs estimate is based on 2014 costs. Inflation models used in the industry project the cost of materials and labor to increase by 3% per year, meaning that delays incur substantial penalties.

Then there is the nagging and inconvenient problem of the highway department garage at the West New Boston site. It appears that Sandisfield has no choice but to build a new facility.

In Bryarly's opinion, "repair of the existing building is not feasible." To the Selectmen this is really not news but Jacobs reminded them that this problem is the most urgent. Inadequate in almost every aspect, including safety, there are

Strategic Planning Committee are:


- Current facilities are not code compliant;
- Code repairs and upgrades will not even meet current needs;
- The Town is not positioned to properly serve the community in the future;
- Upgrading obsolete buildings is unwise use of financial resources; and
- Due to structural problems and an inadequate, environmentally vulnerable site, repair of the DPW garage is not recommended.

The Committee believes that problems with Town facilities have reached a point where there is no practical alternative to new construction. Jacobs said that the committee would turn its attention to identifying possible sites for a municipal complex.

The thinking is for an approximately 20-acre parcel preferably located on or very near Sandisfield Road but away from flood-prone rivers and streams. The committee will also investigate funding alternatives and develop proposals for sale, re-purposing or disposal of the existing buildings, notably the DPW garage. Members hope to gain insight by visiting nearby towns who have successfully dealt with similar issues.

Jacobs concluded by emphasizing that the time had come for a Master Plan. Long considered

"This is a challenging situation and needs to be remediated as soon as possible," Jacobs said. "But we have to be careful and work deliberately so that our new facilities are both affordable and properly designed to meet the Town's needs for the foreseeable future. Right now the only support we need is funding to retain a professional to advance the Master Plan."

The Committee hopes to hold periodic public information sessions to review both the status of the facilities and progress on the Master Plan. 

Group Formed to Oppose Pipeline Expansion

By Bill Price


Abutters of the gas pipeline in the northeast section of town were informed last summer that the operator, Tennessee Gas, intended to add a third line parallel to the existing lines.

The news came as an unpleasant surprise to the Town, considering the anticipated environmental damage and disruption across the 4-mile length of the corridor.

Since then, the company has conducted engineering, environmental, and archeological surveys as required as part of the permitting process. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the government agency that has the final say, is expected to hold a public meeting in Sandisfield within the next few months.

Meanwhile, residents of the Beech Plain, the section that would be most affected by the project, have "gone to school" about gas pipelines. Their research into complex safety, environmental, and economic consequences has been "eye-opening," according to Roberta Myers, a long-time Beech Plain resident and one of the directly impacted property owners.

Ms. Myers represents a grass roots effort called "Sandisfield Taxpayers Opposing the Pipeline" (STOP). Its purpose is to inform residents about the many problems associated with adding this line. The group's case is laid out by her in an "Out On a Limb" column on page 8.

The group is also sponsoring a resolution against the third line and hopes that voters will turn out in large numbers at the Annual Town Meeting on May 17 to support the resolution. Although legally non-binding, the resolution, if roundly approved, would send a strong signal to local, state, and federal elected representatives to take action on behalf of their constituents. 

Sandisfield Buildings Assessment & Repair Cost Analysis

Town Facility	Yr. Built	Acres	Sq Ft	Appraisal	Repairs Est.
Old Town Hall	about 1945	0.55	2,236	\$154,500	\$396,026
Town Hall Annex	1949	1.49	4,226	\$295,400	\$452,232
Library	1977	1.23	1,728	\$130,000	\$335,010
TOTAL Buildings		3.27	8,190	\$579,900	\$1,183,268
DPW site	about 1950	0.88	n/a	\$187,300	not feasible*
TOTAL		4.15	8,190	\$767,200	\$1,183,268

*New facility (building only) estimate: \$1,500,000

Source: Sandisfield Strategic Planning Committee

also concerns about the site's environmental impact given its location so close to the Silverbrook. Moreover, the parcel is too small and too close to the river for a new building, calculated by Bryarly to need 6,000 sq. ft. The estimated \$1.5 million price tag does not include purchase of land.

Final conclusions by Bryarly and endorsed by the

here but without a past champion, "a master plan is a critical element to enable Sandisfield to compete for substantial grants to alleviate the burden of constructing and repairing public roads and buildings as well as to promote growth and economic development," she said.

Residents will wonder what to expect from now on.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Happy Birthday to Us

As of this month, The Times is 4 years old. Once again, we'd like to thank our readers and supporters.

While we've taken our share of sticks and stones recently, we've also gathered words of encouragement, appreciation, atta-boys, notes telling us to keep up the good work, writers sending stuff, and people calling with news ideas. We've even heard people on the street (or rather, on the road) telling us, "I have to read the damn thing cover to cover now."

All the above, even some of the sticks and stones, makes our small band of brother and sister volunteers feel good about what we're producing every month. We like putting the paper together, and we like that you're reading it.

Take a look at Susan Galik's list of ideas on page 12 of how the town might make some money. Some of her ideas might even work. And if you have ideas of your own, or ideas on any other angle for the town, you might send them along to the town's Suggestion Box.

Plan to attend the Town Caucus on April 10 and see who is running for the sixteen open offices in town government. You might run for one of them yourself. This is our town, and it's up to us to make it work.

*Bill Price
West New Boston*

Board Resignations Unexpected

TOWN OFFICIALS MOVE TO SUPPORT BOARDS

By Bill Price

Early March saw dramatic changes in the make-up of two important boards in Town government. One person resigned from both the Board of Health and the Planning Board and two others resigned from the Planning Board.

The resignations caused Town officials to scramble to present a revised list of vacancies for the May election. There were only a few days left until the cut-off date for obtaining election papers, March 27. Filing had to be completed March 31.

State regulations of open-meeting laws require the timely creation of meeting minutes, whether they've been approved or are in draft form. Asked at the November 18 Selectmen's meeting for last year's Board of Health minutes so that other board issues could be addressed, Board Secretary Kathleen Segrin replied that she did not have the minutes nor were notes of minutes available. It seemed there were few minutes of the Planning Board, as well.

Ms. Segrin, who no longer works for the Town, resigned from her elected positions on both boards in March. Planning Board Chair Gary Bottums, Sr., not having been consulted about the change, resigned, as did a third board member, Gene Riiska.

"We regret the resignations of these elected officials," said Select Board chair Jeff Gray. "In retrospect, we might have involved members of the boards, but for personnel decisions and other issues made in Select Board executive sessions, we decided to move ahead. But it's important to have these boards in place."

"The town is focusing on issues that are coming at us very soon," said Town Administrator Lisa Black-

mer. "The Select Board just approved the Paspulletti's proposal for a combined store and gas station on Rt. 8. There will be other issues in regard to their application and decisions that will involve both the Board of Health and the Planning Board.

"We're looking to the future," she said. "We have some exciting projects proposed and expect to have a working Planning Board by their regularly scheduled meeting in April. The Selectmen can appoint members to serve at least temporarily until the election."

The Town Administrator listed some of the issues that will soon come before the board. "One is the question of the proposed monastery on Town Hill Road. Another is the proposed re-opening of a machine shop at the red barn on 57. And we need to re-submit grant applications to help us create momentum for business growth and move toward drafting a master plan for the town."

The three resignations from the Planning Board meant there were suddenly four vacancies. Member Nick Della-Giustina had resigned in December for unrelated reasons. Only member Willard Platt who had been re-elected to a 5-year term last May was left as a Planning Board member.

At the three-member Board of Health, only two individuals were left: Victor Hryckvich and Kim Spring. Since the board can't fully function with only two members, Victor, who is standing for re-election in May, and Kim, elected last year to a 3-year term, asked if Margaret O'Clair, who had previously served as a member of the board for several years, could temporarily fill the vacancy until the coming election. Margaret agreed and was appointed as a member at the March 10 Select Board meeting.

By the end of March, filing opportunities for town offices will have closed and nomination papers filed. The last day to register to vote at the Annual Town Meeting and Town Election is April 28. Annual Town Meeting is Saturday, May 17, with the election the following Monday, May 19.

NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL TOWN CAUCUS

April 10, 2014, 7:00 p.m. Old Town Hall, 3 Silverbrook Road

This is a revised list of offices up for election this year. While the cutoff date for taking out nomination papers has passed, you can also attend the Town Caucus to be nominated there to be placed on the ballot.

Office	Term	Office	Term
Moderator	1 year	Board of Health	3 years
Town Clerk	3 years	Planning Board	1 year
Selectmen	3 years	Planning Board	2 years
Treasurer	3 years	Planning Board	3 years
Auditor	1 year	Planning Board	5 years
Board of Assessors	3 years	Library Trustee	5 years
School Committee	3 years	Constable	3 years
Board of Health	1 year	Constable	3 years

Rabies Alert Still On

Report any wild or domestic animal that appears to be acting unusual in any way. Kim Spring, Animal Health Warden, reports that a sick bobcat spotted late March appears to have had rabies. Don't hesitate to call 413-258-4450.

Celebrate Spring

(yes, it's coming)

SANDISFIELD ARTS CENTER DINNER AND LIVE AUCTION
SATURDAY, APRIL 12TH

By Mary Anne Grammer

It's time to shake off the winter doldrums and welcome spring!

Come welcome Spring at the Sandisfield Arts Center, Saturday, April 12th at 7 p.m. Tickets, \$50 per person, include a 3-course dinner prepared by Chef Adam Manacher (dishes are

prepared with vegetarians in mind) and auction hosted by Alison Larkin, British comedian. Bidding opportunities will range from the sweet and savory to the artistic and practical.

Examples of items to be auctioned are: A 6-person catered Brazilian

Feast at your home (Samba music included), a half-case of Homemade Local Hard Cider, lessons in watercolors, grapevine wreath design, or voice lessons with Benjamin Luxon. Get your paddle ready as you bid for a cord of wood or a French Limoges Tea Set.

Perhaps you're ready to travel to Monterey, California for a 3-night stay at a local home. Or per-


haps you want to have your garden bloom with 100 bulbs planted by a professional horticulturist.

Items to be auctioned will also include Cane Your Seat, an opportunity to have that chair in the back of the garage returned to its usefulness. Or perhaps you're ready for a night on the town and ready to show off your new multi-stoned silver bracelet. How about an haute couture Proenza Schouler accessory to augment an outfit? Maybe it's your sofa that needs a makeover with new pillow covers.

Is a special occasion coming up such as a wedding anniversary, milestone birthday, or birth of a child? How about a poem especially created to commemorate the event?

Still hungry? How about a fruit pie or Tangerine cake? Pavlova's for your next dinner party or a classic English Sherry-Grand Marnier Trifle delivered by a Sandisfield celebrity?

Join together with local residents and celebrate the return of Spring to benefit the Sandisfield Arts Center by attending the dinner and live auction. Tickets are available at the Arts Center website: www.sandisfieldartscenter.org. Tickets will not be available at the door and must be purchased on line by April 8.

Yes, Spring will come. 



Alison Larkin

Council on Aging



By Susan Galik

While the winter was cold and snowy, seniors learned more and more about benefits available to them at two health fairs sponsored by the COA.

The first workshop explained insurance benefits available through the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Help is available for those who find themselves paying a lot of money for medications.

The second was coordinated with Porch Light, the Visiting Nurse Service that covers all of Berkshire County. Porch Light provides nurses and aides as well as therapy and various health programs. Representatives of Food Stamps were on hand at the second health fair to help us better understand state benefits that are given, what we need to provide to be approved, and what foods we can buy through the program.

On Wednesday, April 9, a Nutrition/Wellness program explaining the advantages in eating well will be held at COA in basement of the Town Hall Annex at 11 a.m. Everyone – regardless of age – is invited to join us to learn more about what is good to eat that is good for us. The invitation is especially extended to anyone in town who happens to be diabetic. Please arrange your schedule to join us.

The Quilting class with Teresa Bills began March 31, but will welcome anyone who'd like to attend. The free class will continue for 6 weeks, Mondays at 6 p.m. at the Town Hall Annex. Thank you to the Arts Center for providing the funds.

We will have a SPRING flower arrangement class on April 14, Monday, from 2-4 p.m. at the Town Hall Annex. Cost is \$5. The instructor will be the same gentlemen who did our Christmas arrangement. All material will be on hand.

An elder-law attorney will be available on one Wednesday toward the end of May. Please watch for exact date. If you are in your 50's or older, be thinking of questions you'd like to ask. Let Linda Riiska know at 258-4816.

On the 4th Wednesday of each month, we will watch a movie after lunch. Please call with suggestions. The movie begins about 12:30. In April we'll watch short films with either Red Skelton or Lucille Ball.

The COA offers free transportation on Tuesdays, anywhere you'd like to go, doctor appointments, shopping, hair dresser, visit a friend. Please call the week before to make arrangements. Call Linda at 258-4816.

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JOYCE'S TRADING POST

Cont'd from p.1

over the last several months to replace the loss of the New Boston Store.

In voting yes, the Select Board followed state procedures in its review and approval process. The Board's approval is based on the development plans submitted, with additional information required within 90 days. The permits require that an escrow account funded by the developer be set up enabling the town to cover expenses such as retaining traffic consultants to analyze the project and other related costs, including legal fees. The permits also allow the new store permission for a roadside sign on Route 8.

An interested member of the audience was Happy Banga of Lee who has proposed his own convenience store/gas station on land almost directly across Rt. 8 from the site of the Paspuletti's store. He asked about the impact the store would have on his plans and was told that each project is considered independently and individually as presented and that the economic viability of a competing store would be a question for an accountant.

Hours of operation at Joyce's Trading Post were agreed at 5 a.m. to 11 p.m. Still to be obtained are state permits for the gas/diesel tanks and the proposed package store and the building permit. Closing on the sale of the land from Eric and Dawn Pachulski has yet to be completed. Some changes may be required in town by-laws.

The public can still examine plans for the proposed development in the Select Board office at Town Hall Annex during normal business hours, but please call ahead to allow time for the plans to be made available: 258-4075.

From the audience, Mary Turek asked that if the location is also used as a farmer's market on weekends, as proposed, would the planned 10 parking


spaces, plus 3 behind the store, be enough? Kim replied that in that instance additional parking would be available in the adjoining lot, with the cooperation of MJ Tuckers.

The Paspuletti's will have a working generator, Kim said, and in case the town loses power or in an emergency could serve as "an alternative site for people along with Firehouse #2."

Other questions involved the building site, elevation, access to the highway. The entrance to Joyce's would be about 80 feet from the entrance to Tuckers, the next property to the north. Victor Hyrkovich of the Board of Health said that the right-of-way is required to be 50 feet, not



the proposed 45 feet. The response was that the question would be addressed. Building Inspector Eric Munson questioned the safety of semi-trailer trucks entering and exiting the facility. The issue of access to the site have been addressed by the State Department of Transportation.

In the audience, Sandra Snyder pointed out that she and her husband, Andy, are often asked by people stopping at their farm stand where they can get some gas or a cup of coffee in Sandisfield. "After we stop laughing," she said, "we explain that for either it is quite a distance out of town. It will be wonderful to actually send them to Kim and Chandru's new venture and be able to support another local business." 

A Letter from Kim Paspuletti

TO THE TOWN OF SANDISFIELD:

Joyce's Trading Post will be a local independent general store.

Our Mission Statement:

- First & Foremost: Serve the community of Sandisfield.
- Promote and sell local products.
- Be the gateway to the Berkshires on Route 8.
- Operate a convenience store and fuel station.

Chandru & I love the Berkshires and have been visiting here for decades. We finally put down solid roots 20 years ago in the Town of Sandisfield in the beautiful Berkshires. We became full-time community members in 2000.

While I grew up and graduated from college in the Midwest, my heart belongs to this small, nostalgic, bucolic corner of Western Massachusetts. I first became involved in the Sandisfield Recreation Committee. Then deeply involved with the Farmington Elementary School and represented our town as a school committee member.

After the tragedy of the New Boston Store, Chandru and I felt a need to help our town.

We are committed to this project. We envision our store to be more than just a convenience store. We want it to be a community place. Lighting will be low impact with consideration for our neighbors. The store will be about 2,200 square feet with a 75-foot porch.

Additional goals:

- Farmers' market supporting local growers.
- Spotlight local tradesmen, artisans, and creative people.

I feel all of us, Villa Mia, MJ Tuckers, Connie's Country Store, and the New Boston Inn will benefit in the coming years by having this trading post.

We want to keep the charm of Sandisfield while helping to fill the needs of our community.

Regards,

Kim Paspuletti

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Sandisfield's Kim Cormier, who teaches 6th grade language arts at Monument Valley Middle School in Great Barrington, was featured in a Berkshire Record article in the March 21-27 issue. It is excerpted here with the Record's permission.

Monument's Kim Cormier

A COMMITMENT TO TEACHING ALL STUDENTS

By Terry Cowgill, Berkshire Record

When Kim Cormier was growing up in Winsted, many of the teachers at St. Anthony's, the parochial school in town, were a bit old fashioned in their approaches to instruction.

"I am very visual and needed to learn that way," said Cormier. And so began her path to becoming a teacher. Cormier went on to Northwestern Regional High School and the University of St. Joseph in West Hartford, majoring in elementary-education child study. She became fascinated with middle schoolers, realizing early on that she wanted to touch the lives of children through the classroom and beyond.

Cormier also knew from her own experience as a nontraditional learner that teachers must engage students through any means possible, including theatrics. "Some days I feel like I'm half circus performer," said Cormier.

But it's also important, as a teacher of literature, to select reading material that is both relevant and exciting for adolescents. One of Cormier's favorite topics is the civil rights movement. Most of her students are aware of the legacy of slavery but few have an understanding of the struggle for civil rights and racial equality in the 1950s and 60s. One of her favorites is "Warriors Don't Cry," a searing memoir of the battle to integrate Central High in Little Rock, Ark.

She loves to teach Sharon Draper's "Out Of My Mind," a novel about a very smart 11-year-old who learns and acts differently and is therefore terribly misunderstood. "It opens up the kids to face some of their own challenges. Everybody faces something and if they're not alone, it makes them feel better. I lead with my highest interest and they develop trust."

After graduating from St. Joseph's, Cormier took a few years off to raise her two daughters, Hunter and Lily, who are students across the street at Monument Mountain Regional High School. She eventually got involved with a pre-school program in the Farmington River School District, then landed a one-year leave-replacement teaching position at Undermountain Elementary School in Sheffield. For the last six years, she has been at Monument, where she says she loves every minute of it.

In her spare time, Cormier is finishing up a graduate program in language and reading at UMass.

Ben Doren, her principal, said, "Kim Cormier is one of the best teachers I have met in my professional career. I am most amazed by her commitment to teaching all students – from the highest achieving to the struggling reader, from the bright and energetic to the withdrawn and insecure, from the conventional to the unique, Kim is able to reach each and every child as an individual."

It's no wonder that Kim says, "Before now, I've never had a job where I liked coming into work every day." 




Special Earth Day Event

EVERYTHING YOU NEVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT GAS PIPELINES

A timely, appropriate and important event in conjunction with Earth Day 2014 will be held at the Sandisfield Arts Center, April 19. Timely and appropriate because Sandisfield is facing a very real possibility of pipeline expansion. Important - because of real dangers faced by us and our planet owing to new methods of energy development.

Bruce Winn of Berkshire Environmental Action Team from Pittsfield and Rose Wessel represent-

ing a grass roots movement called "No Fracked Gas in Mass" will describe the factors driving this phenomenon and what's at stake. A screening of the documentary film "Gaslands" will follow the presentations.

Venue: Saturday, April 19th at 1 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center, 5 Hammertown Road, Sandisfield. Admission: \$5. 

tony indino
master carpenter

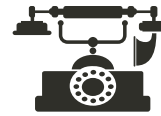
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THE PARTY LINE

Cont'd from p.1



aspirations – and their daughter. The place had many charms: a well with a bucket I could actually wind up and down, an ice house, a root cellar, a barn with wooden steps to a hayloft, apple trees to pick and climb, a pond – and no phone.

We were told no telephone service was available and we accepted it – even my dad, who ran a successful business in New York City. In those days, of course, it was possible for a business to survive for a few days without a phone – or fax or computer. Inconvenient, maybe, but not impossible.

At first, the lack of a phone didn't really bother any of us. Certainly not me, even though at home I talked for hours with my friend Mimi. I still remember her phone number: CEderhurst 2586.

Similarly, when home in the city, my mother Clae, a singer, often chatted with her voice teacher, Madame Garrigues. The phone was also the chief assault weapon in my mother's unrelenting efforts to raise money for various worthy causes, musical or otherwise. But once she donned her kerchief and overalls in Sandisfield, she seemed to cast aside those concerns. (Women's overalls weren't made then, so with typical ingenuity she had her couturier alter a man's "small" into a fetching country outfit.)

I wasn't privy to what went on in my dad's New York business – a world apart from Cedarhurst and Sandisfield, both physically and psychologically – but some problem must have arisen that prompted him to action.

What powers of persuasion he used, I don't know. He was after all a self-made man with plenty of experience at making things happen. I only know that one Friday afternoon when we arrived at Silverbrook Farm there were telephone poles on our road and a phone that worked. (I'd been allowed to name the place and with a shocking lack of originality had named it after the nearby brook.)

The black rotary sat in a place of honor on a small round table with a chair in front of it beside our staircase. We had similar phones at home in Cedarhurst of course, but because we'd been so long without one in Sandisfield, this one seemed special. Certainly it never occurred to me to try to call Mimi. I just knew the phone was not for frivolous chatter.

In fact, impossible as it seems in these days of constant communicating, for the first year or so nobody used it much. Largely ignored, it sat in solitary splendor in the shadow of the stairs. I

guess whatever business issue prompted its introduction into our lives was soon resolved.

After a year or so, my dad told me that we were going to be sharing the phone with our nearest neighbors – probably the Smiths, a half mile away at the top of the road. Somehow I couldn't picture Mr. Smith, who had a pegleg and a gruff, forbidding presence, using it.

And maybe the family up the road from them who ran the post office from their house. I hoped they wouldn't be on it because their blonde, curly-haired daughter made nasty remarks when I visited the one-room schoolhouse my cousin attended a few days in a row. ("It's all right to have a guest once, Helen," she sniffed, "but not two or three times!")

But it turned out it was only the Smiths. And in fact you'd never have suspected the line was shared. I can't recall a single instance when my parents said it was in use when they wanted to make a call.

All that changed ...

All that changed a few years later. Our nearest neighbors down the road, the Roosevelts, 3/4s of a mile away in the other direction, wanted phone service, too. I remember my mother and father debating the matter. For others on our road to have individual lines, more unsightly telephone poles would have to be installed. So the decision was made. We would share the line with yet another family.



Now, when I picked up the phone there might be other people talking. This was always startling, the realization that other lives were going on, other plans being made that had nothing to do with us, one of my first realizations that there were clusters of lives outside our orbit.

Soon, though, when the phone rang, I knew whether to answer it. The Smiths had one ring, we had two, and our neighbors the Roosevelts, at the bottom of the hill, had three. Much later, when we became friends with the Roosevelts and were at each other's houses, if we heard our ring we could pick up the line and answer. This always seemed a delightful game.


But sometimes, if I wanted to make a call – by then I'd outgrown my awed respect for the instrument – Willard Roosevelt or other members of his household would be on the line for what seemed like hours. Willard was a composer, and

I imagined him talking to his fellow musicians in New York, setting up concert dates. Or was he? I was in my teens by then, and had an intense – if so far only literary and cinematic – interest in romance and especially tragic affairs. (Think Brief Encounter.) I began to wonder what could possibly keep him on the line for so long.

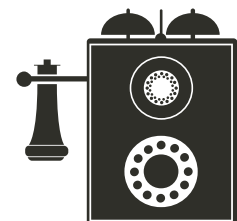
Only then did the possible entertainment value of the party line occur to me. With shaking hands, I'd lift the receiver as gently as I could and listen in. But it was very disappointing. No whispering voices; no clandestine arrangements; no mysterious doings. In fact, it became quite boring. Then the problem became how to hang up without giving myself away. I'd lower the handle as slowly as I could, and if anyone was any the wiser, they never said so.

If someone at our end really needed to make a call, they'd do the same – only much less gently. We never broke in and asked them to hang up. Nor did they us. We just gave each other this none-too-subtle hint.

In time, this cozy arrangement ended. By then, I was grown up and married, with three small children. More people wanted their own phones, and it turned out that the same lines originally installed for us could now be supplemented and used for many others.

So the party line came to an end. The rotary phone next to the staircase, a relic as obsolete as the technology that replaced it, was relegated to my grandchildren's toy cabinet. They can hardly believe that the clunky object with the satisfying whirr when dialed was a real phone. In its place sits a sleek if often malfunctioning new model that in any case is rarely used. With cell phones, facebook, linked-in, and their ilk, who needs a party line – or even a land line – anymore? 

This is the second of Jo Garfield's reminiscences of Sandisfield. Her first, "The Pond," appeared in The Times, August 2012.





Sandisfield: Oppose Pipeline Expansion!

By Roberta Myers

My husband, the late Dr. Ron Myers, and I moved to our Sandisfield weekend house in 1975. We left behind the hassles and perils of suburban New Jersey life to raise our blended family of seven children in a quiet, clean, secure and beautiful place we all loved. Ronny had bought the property from the Rowley family in 1963, and we all worked hard to save, restore, and upgrade this Greek Revival-style house, putting up barns and raising animals.

Perhaps we were too busy with the chaos of a large family to pay much attention to the pipeline which was already in place; we didn't ask many questions about it.

If we had done so, our neighbors, farmers Bill and Marvin Rowley, would have told how, in the 1950s, despite their pleas, the Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company (TGP) came in with earth moving equipment and out-of-state crews to rip a 75-foot swath through the farm that had been in their family since the 1760s. They watched as farmland that supported generations of Rowleys – Hawleys and Adamses before them – were altered forever so a 24" epoxy-coated stainless steel pipe could be laid to transport gas. Connecticut needed gas. It was for the public good. For their trouble, the Rowleys were paid with some 8-foot lengths of firewood.

In 1981, the Myers family got its first taste of what the Rowley family experienced 30 years before. A second pipeline!

TGP folks were genial, but it was the same story. Big equipment, out-of-state crews, destruction, and life disrupted. We protested weakly but to no avail and were paid a small sum for a "right of way." We continued to pay taxes on property we couldn't use. Pipelines create unnatural corridors for predators to attack ground-nesting birds, and coyotes took advantage to reach our sheep and chickens.

And there was something else! During blasting at another section, a huge boulder flew into the air and landed on the operating first line which ruptured! At 760 PSI, a volcano of natural gas shot into the atmosphere. A crew member told a reporter that if that gas had ignited, "it would have been like an atomic bomb." Lucky us!



The pipeline is a 75-foot pathway through the woods with two gas lines buried a few feet underground.

Families in north Sandisfield, Tolland, and Otis were evacuated. We were told to run for our lives leaving behind everything including farm animals. Miraculously, no one was killed that time. But the gas explosion in New York City just last month, the one in Springfield last year, and shocking incidents all around the country are reminders of the awful danger we face right here.

Later, probably in the 1990s, TGP approached us to ask permission to install a "cathodic protection unit" at Cold Spring Farm. There is no record of this in the Town Hall files, but I think there are other units in town.

We were told that this measure was necessary because errors in the installation of the initial pipeline caused frost-heaving rocks to rub against the pipe. The line is bathed in electrons to keep the iron oxidation state low, minimizing rust on the compromised pipe. Of course, we allowed this safety measure. We all know Sandisfield has plenty of rocks.

So now they are back to put in a third line. This time, both full-time and seasonal Sandisfield residents are organizing Sandisfield Taxpayers Opposing the Pipeline, or STOP for short. The group will inform townspeople about how this project threatens our families' safety, how it imperils the environment, and why the whole idea is intolerable.

You need to know.

This pipeline is potentially dangerous.

At 36" in diameter, it is 50% larger than the existing lines. It is called a "loop" – an enormous 4 mile-long storage tank. Under very high pressure, loops are used to boost the velocity of gas through adjacent high-pressure lines. One of our pipelines is 62 years old and possibly compromised, as was that gas line that blew up in Harlem last month. What is our line's condition? It wasn't good in the '90s, but the company is not saying.

A recent Wall Street Journal article (March 14, 2014) addressed the industry cost of pipeline accidents, but not the price paid by others affected by the rush to expand pipeline networks. These pipelines are underground bombs about 18" to 24" below the surface! If there is another rupture or, say, a forest fire, are our local Fire and Rescue folks equipped to handle the emergency? It's a good question that should be asked as we consider the safety of our immediate families and our grandchildren.

Sandisfield's pipelines, situated virtually entirely in wetlands, cross rivers, streams and vernal pools with a real potential of toxins leaking into ground, air, and water. We hear about new pipelines all over the country because of a bonanza of oil and gas supplies from hydraulic fracturing. This method is controversial; unknown chemicals, used in extraction, flow with the gas

The pipeline threatens the environment.

TGP's third line will at least double the width of the existing corridor to 150 ft. It will destroy forest, recreation, and even conservation land, including a section of Otis State Forest/Spectacle Pond, reducing wildlife habitat that was considered forever protected. Perhaps worst of all, pipelines spread highly invasive species like phragmites, thick clumps of grass that can cover a meadow or river bank, relent-



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lessly choking out everything else and growing as tall as 10 feet or more. Take a ride sometime down Cold Spring Road. You will see it.

Taxpayers will be affected.

All of Sandisfield will pay individually and as a town to upgrade emergency response capability, including costly sophisticated equipment and special training.

If this loop goes in, Sandisfield will be less attractive for newcomers, for development and for recreation. Home sales and prices could be jeopardized. Beech Plain property devaluation will result in town-wide tax reapportionment.

Tennessee Gas has paid virtually no taxes locally for over 60 years. Parent company Kinder-Morgan (\$110 billion sales) is a private corporation led by Chairman Richard Kinder, the 34th richest person in the country.

Also, we've now heard that cost of construction is proposed to be placed on electric service ratepayers, not Kinder-Morgan or its shareholders. So every time you turn on an appliance you'll be paying a portion of the cost. Moreover, the gas that passes through here is destined for Connecticut and probably overseas. There is no local benefit at all.

You can help.

Attend the Annual Town Meeting on May 17 and VOTE FOR THE RESOLUTION to oppose construction of new pipeline in Sandisfield. The Resolution, which will soon be circulated in town, will be printed in the Times May issue. If you are among Sandisfield's many non-resident taxpayers, you won't be able to vote, but you can attend the Town Meeting and speak out. You matter. Our Selectmen care about you and need to hear your concerns.

Stand with your friends and neighbors. Tell Town, State and Federal elected representatives to protect us, their constituents. Let's stop this monstrosity once and for all! ♣

Out on a Limb: an op-ed
Subjects should be interesting to most of us and have a strong link to Sandisfield, written by and for Town residents. Address either PO Box 584, Sandisfield, or email editor@sandisfieldtimes.org

Falling in Love

Love wipes out everything:
 Fear of fat. Fear of death.
 They're both gone, and in their place
 Up around the nose and eyes
 Is that muffled thrill
 That...say...Bach provides
 With the flutes in the B Minor Mass.

*Val Coleman
 Town Hill Road*

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A slightly different version of Brigitte's article was published in the Berkshire Eagle, March 8. It is used here by special arrangement.

The Loss of the Hewins Barn

A TRAGEDY IN SHEFFIELD

By Brigitte Ruthman

It was a barn once, and for a long time.

It was a barn already in 1837 when a Hewins first put his name on the deed on Hewins Street in Sheffield and began the labor intensive, repetitive seasonal work of farming in New England: milking cows in the stone-lined first floor and filling the bays above with summer's sweet timothy, fescue, and clover.

It had survived centuries of storms and hay storage – snow that piled on roofs replaced over the years and hay that sometimes overheated in storage after being gathered from the shady, outside woodline rows along fertile fields in the river plain where dew lingered. But not now, not this March when the last rows of dry hay were being peeled away and tossed through an opening in the floor every hay tender knew to step over.

Six horses had already been let out when the old barn heaved its last breath Monday morning. An electrical short caused by a heating rod used to keep water from freezing fizzled into combustibles on the lower level. Someone called. The barn was on fire. Flames were just licking at the siding.

The coordinated effort that would involve a dozen fire departments and hundreds of thousands of gallons of water couldn't save the barn. The fuel was too rich. Once ignited, the burning hay couldn't be stopped. Water hoses protected the carpentry shop as heat melted the siding, and the home next door.

"If I could pick, I'd have wished the house had burned instead," said Teri Licata, a Hewins daughter who lived in the home next door. "It hurts so much."

The twisted metal of the antique tractors her father, Walter Hewins Jr., had kept in running order – until his death eight years ago at the age of 74 – jutted out from the blackened corpse, rubber gone. The driving wheel of the skeleton of a '40s model John Deere framed the iconic fertile valley and the Taconic ridgeline beyond. Even in the bitter cold, the awful smell of burning metal and rubber lingered for days, something wholly different than the sweet smell of a wood fire. Here, something had died.

The Hewins barn was like the Zuckerman's barn in E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web*: "full of

all sorts of things that you find in barns: ladders, grindstones, pitch forks, monkey wrenches, scythes, lawn mowers, snow shovels, ax handles, milk pails, water buckets, empty grain sacks, and rusty rat traps. It was the kind of barn that swallows like to build their nests in. It was the kind of barn that children like to play in."

It's where Tim Hewins broke his arm jumping into the hay from a rafter and generations of Hewins have toiled. It's where Robert Hewins was the last to milk cows in the mid-1960s before moving on to other ventures. And when a Hewins was done, the town laid them to rest in the Hewins Cemetery. The carcasses of a half dozen vintage tractors are piled against each other now in the barnyard, like wartime rubble.

In the back was a tool and work shop, where an implement could once be found for just about every task – if not manufactured, then made by hand. It was on first blush a messy hoarding of things, until the eye adjusted to its own sort of order with enough room to walk from one end of the 100-foot long span to the other. One of the uncles who returned from war in the 1940s bought four shiny battleship grey stanchions lined with wood, and stored them in the barn intending to replace the older wooden ones. But the days of family farming were already waning. The nearly forgotten stanchions were retrieved five years ago by Tim Hewins who made them to click shut in proper framing around my cows in Sandisfield, treasures now even more coveted as reminders of a vanishing way of life.

The neat cuts to square logs made in virgin timber to the sound of squaring axes in the 1700s were erased by the crackling flames that roared through them despite valiant efforts by firefighters. The stalwart timber frame crumbled, but four days later boasted solid wooden chestnut cores and tight joints as hay still smoldered around them.

It was a loss that struck deep in the heart of the community as well as a family. For the same reason they honked or waved if a barn door was open in the summer or a familiar truck or car was outside, they came in a steady stream this week to mourn. 🇺🇸

It is a public and private loss. Donations have been heartfelt, though pride makes it reluctantly accepted. It's too early to say exactly what will rise over these ashes, but something will after the winter is gone.

Who can measure the loss to future generations who will never know the peaceful sound of animals stirring in winter, the pure joy of a swing hanging from a beam, or the blissful, excruciating heat as the last bales pile high against the cross beams while swallows chirp their summer song and tend their nests.

Ultimately though, loss is as much a part of farming as renewal. As if to remind of the pattern, the Hewins' 3-year-old granddaughter assessed the damage. "We've got to clean up this mess," she said.

A vintage tractor, destroyed with the barn.

Below, a burned and melted sickle bar



Rugged Survivors a Link to the Past

IF WE LOSE THE HAWLEY BARN ...

By Brigitte Ruthman

Inside the Hawley Barn.

Photo credit: Larry Dwyer

Sandisfield once boasted hundreds of hand-hewn barn frames, a dozen or so of which remain as historical and architectural monuments to an agrarian way of life. In a town born to family farming, our surviving barns remind us, as do the old stone walls that wind round them, of the people and livestock that inhabited this place long ago and the continuity of certain things.



The Hawley barn on Cold Spring Road

Sheffield had its desirable bottom land while Sandisfield made do with its less fertile hillside pastures, orchards, and chicken houses. Guernsey and Durham cows and oxen that served as tractors grazed the hillsides.

All farmhouses had barns of one sort or another – often four or five of them, notes *Sandisfield Then and Now* author and local historian Ron Bernard. A few were as magical as the Hewins barn that was recently destroyed by fire in Sheffield. Many Sandisfield barns burned and were replaced throughout the 1800s or, as farming became less profitable, not replaced at all.

Builders trained in European-pegged construction quickly ran out of old growth hickory so they turned to oak, chestnut, and hemlock. They felled the trees with broad axe heads and then squared them with the same axes. What has survived remains strong. Chestnut, for instance, can become so petrified as to keep a nail from being pounded into it.

Builders trained in European-pegged construction quickly ran out of old growth hickory so they turned to oak, chestnut, and hemlock. They felled the trees with broad axe heads and then squared them with the same axes. What has survived remains strong. Chestnut, for instance, can become so petrified as to keep a nail from being pounded into it.

Sandisfield's brutal windswept winters prompted the construction of connecting barns – a habit that made its way on high ground from Maine south through New Hampshire and Vermont. It provided tenders a covered route from home to barn in foul weather, a quick route that also hastened the demise of buildings when fire broke out. The practice of connecting a home to a barn is illegal today.

Fire was a regular nemesis, although a necessary source of warmth and light. Imagine illuminating your way through chores by lantern and candle light. Hay was packed loosely before balers, providing an easy fuel source.

Still, careful practices preserved a few of these pioneer barns. The survivors were often the ones without electrical wiring that could be chewed by mice to cause a fire, were safely tucked away from high ground where lightning could strike, or had the benefit of repaired roofs that kept out the destructive force of water.

One of Sandisfield's most precious barns, the main building at the Hawley farm on Cold Spring Road, remains standing, though its demise is now assured by holes in the roof. Only quick work by our local fire department saved this barn from death by arson in January 2012 (see *Sandisfield Times*, March 2012).

Its builders had been trained in English barn construction, possibly employed by pioneer Richard Adams before the Revolution. Its massive sturdy frame once held the famed Hawley Guernsey cows and oxen of other breeds that powered mills and drew logs for lumbering. The floor was worn smooth by a century's worth of horse's hooves that trod over it before tractors did.



The possibility exists that the barn could be moved in order to save it. While moving the barn would alter its architectural and historical significance, it would protect it from an ultimate demise that now seems apparent. The cost of renewal has so far been prohibitive.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts owns the Hawley barn now, along with neighboring land protected as part of the much-debated Spectacle Pond purchase. Standing in an opening that is quickly turning from old pasture to viburnum and sapling hardwood, the Hawley barn is one of a few solid frames suggested to the Hewins family as a possible substitute to their barn that burned March 3.

At least one other barn of similar vintage, another gem, has been preserved and restored. It's on the east side of New Hartford Road in South Sandisfield not far from the Connecticut line.

A barn has about 80 years of useful life before it requires major work to keep its form and function alive before it turns to a folksy reminder of another time or just a sad casualty of neglect. But even one beam from one barn is enough to remind us that these monuments stand for art, as well as implement's sake, reminders of a work ethic we are sadly losing. ♡



It Could All Add Up

A DOLLAR HERE, A DOLLAR THERE...

By Susan Galik

Sandisfield is in financial straits. Nothing new there. We knew it was coming. No resources? Um ... I beg to differ. We have volunteers and space (land ... lots of land). So how do we utilize this?

First ... re: the buildings. Designate the Old Town Hall as a senior/community center. This allows the COA (Council on Aging) to apply for grants to refurbish the building and bring it up to code. I suggest we start with the bathrooms. Yes, that's two. I know you feel we only need one. However, in the future ... we will need two. And when we are building or rehabbing these buildings ... we need to think into the FAR future.

When the bathrooms are done ... we allow the highway department to use the building. That then frees up the town to rebuild the highway department building. Basically, it all becomes a domino effect, as each completion allows for another building to be worked on.

Now, volunteers and space. Let's start with January and work our way around the year. Winter sports? Contact snowmobile, cross country ski-

ing, snowshoeing clubs. Offer Yanner Park for a snowmobile rally. Sandisfield State Forest for cross country skiing, the Clam River for snowshoeing. Volunteers organize events, sell hot chocolate, soup, sandwiches ... whatever. I can hear all the negatives already. But, I'm sure that Stockbridge had the same negatives about the Zucchini Festival ... which is now a BIG thing.

How about a Souper Supper. Soup and bread ... maybe a salad and of course dessert. Have all three restaurants and a few others offer several types of soup. Let the bakeries around the Berkshires supply bread ... or even home made from our town members, same with the soup.

Spring. Mud wrestling? LOL ... but, how about tractor pulls? Or any other event that mud lovers will enjoy?

Let's bring back the Lobster Dinner. Have it the last weekend of June ... school is out ... summer is just beginning ... 4th of July is around the corner. Families can plan their 4th get-together around the dinner.

Summer/Fall. Geo caching treasure hunts. Tour de Sandisfield ... take them off Rt. 8 and move them to the back roads around York Lake/Rt. 57. 10K runs? Fishing derby?

A block party in Roosterville. Country square dance for an hour, DJ or local band for next hour ... repeat. Sell vendor spots, food spots ... plus charge an entry fee.

October Fest? Bring back the Haunted House ... only let's have more volunteers so that Robin doesn't have to do it all.

December ... expand the Christmas bizarre. Do something with "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear." Maybe a play?

Other ideas would be a Historic House Tour, a progressive supper using our three restaurants.

We could encourage our local groups, who need fund raising, by starting a 50/50 club. 50% of the profits go to the Town to fix the buildings. 50% to be shared by the local groups. So if the Historical Society, Fire/Emergency, COA, Arts Council, along with let's say the American Legion ... all joined in to help with the event. Then they would each get 10% of the profits.

Or, how about a tax on the gas that will be available shortly? A few pennies per gallon will still make the gas cheaper than Connecticut. And it adds up. Even if all they sold was 1,000 gallons a week ... that would be \$10. And we know they'll sell more than that.

How about 5 cents per pack of cigarettes? A few cents on alcohol? It all adds up ... a little here, a little there. ♪

Out on a Limb: an op-ed

Subjects should be interesting to most of us and have a strong link to Sandisfield, written by and for Town residents. Address either PO Box 584, Sandisfield, or email editor@sandisfieldtimes.org



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Small Town vs. Small City

A COMPARISON

By Roberta Myers

My decision to move near family in California has given me the opportunity to compare differences in regulations and just how things work in my small New England town of Sandisfield and a small California city of Monterey, a beautiful little place on the west coast.

I never realized how straightforward and rational the permitting process is in our town compared to the complicated bureaucracy found in a city, maybe any city, but surely in Monterey.

For example, it took hundreds of dollars and three months of negotiation to obtain a permit to cut down a shallow-rooted tree in my yard which was shading and killing all growth beneath it.

It took nearly five months and many payments to get a building permit for rather simple renovations.

This made me nostalgic about similar processes in Sandisfield. Here in Sandisfield we can attend and speak out at town meetings and are connected to those who run our local government. We know the committee members and inspectors who guide us through regulations – even regulations we don't like. Most of them really consider the situation as well as the rule, trying to facilitate rather than to simply control.

I haven't even moved yet, but I have already become nostalgic about the many years my husband and I have spent in beloved Sandisfield. ♡

Clam River Trail Parking Approved

By Mary Anne Grammer

Get out your hiking boots!

At the March 3 Select Board meeting, parking at the Town Hall Annex for the Clam River Reserve Trail was approved for one year. Residents will be able to park near the entrance to the loop trail on either side of the Annex, which will allow them safe and easy access to the trails.

“Hiking is an important accessible, affordable and healthy activity for all residents of Sandisfield,” said Selectman Jeff Gray. “We have a wealth of beautiful, natural resources and this will make it easier for residents to access trails on the Clam River Reserve.”

Construction will begin this summer so be prepared to explore and even assist Doug Bruce and Mike Leavitt of the Berkshire Natural Resources Council as they plan and build the Clam River Reserve Trail. See you on the trails! ♡

Sandisfield Arts Center



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APRIL

SAT, APR 12 - 7 PM

Spring Dinner & Celebrity Auction

Three-course dinner and an auction of goods and services. British/American author and comedienne Alison Larkin will host the auction. Advance tickets required and can be purchased online until April 8th.

\$50.00



SAT, APR 19 1 PM

Special Earth Day Event

Bruce Winn of Berkshire Environmental Action Team and Rose Wessel representing the Massachusetts grass roots organization, No Fracked Gas in Mass, will review the proposed expansion of gas pipelines in Massachusetts.

\$5.00 suggested donation

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Farewell, Karen

By Bill Price



Our Postmaster, Karen Cooley, has announced her official retirement from the USPS as of the end of April.

Her departure will mark the end of a long run. She has served Sandisfield's postal needs for 25 years, the last 15 as Postmaster.

In an email to friends, Karen wrote that she leaves the postal service with mixed feelings. "Part of me is really looking forward to being free of the responsibility of the office, but the other part is that I will miss all of you. I have loved being your Postmaster."

Karen and her husband, Jim, plan to summer at their camp in Granville and winter in South Carolina.

For now, Sandisfield post office hours and building access will remain the same, although Karen won't be the person behind the counter. Hours may change this fall. Public hearings should be held sometime this summer concerning potential changes.

Connecting at the Speed of Light

OUR LIBRARY LINKS INTO THE WORLD, FASTER

By Times Reporter

When this issue of The Sandisfield Times is in your hands, a small but momentous milestone will have been accomplished: the Sandisfield Library will be up and running on the MBI fiber-optic network.

This is the first fiber-optic connection in Sandisfield and is the result of more than three years of lobbying, planning, and effort. The MBI, which had its construction kickoff at Fire Station #2 with Governor Patrick in July 2011, recently completed its middle-mile network. Preliminary internal cabling and provisioning were completed for the library in mid-March.

The fiber-optic connection at the library is almost twice as fast and more reliable than DSL,

but unlike DSL, which has reached its maximum, fiber optic can provide faster and faster connections as our needs grow. Last-mile connectivity to homes and businesses is still at least two years away, but substantial progress has been made.

You're welcome to come to the library and try it out. The library is open Mon/Tue 9-12:30, Wed 6:30-8:30 p.m., Th 2:30-5:30 p.m., and Sat 9-noon.

For more information about MBI, WiredWest, and fiber-optic internet in Sandisfield, contact Jean Atwater-Williams, chair of Sandisfield's technology committee, at 413-258-8000.



Gallery Sundays

SOMETHING NEW AT SARC. VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Gallery Sundays, a new activity at the Sandisfield Arts Center, will offer a greater opportunity for the public to view art work displayed in the gallery after opening receptions.

There will be four exhibits in 2014, and after the opening events the Gallery will be open again on Sundays from 1 to 4, May 11 through October 12.

Light refreshments will be available, as well as conversation about the art on display and the center. This new activity will make a pleasant stop for residents and guests on Sunday afternoons.

Enough volunteers are being sought so that a one-time participation will support this new endeavor. A system of trading places for conflicts that occur with sign-ups over the season will make it easy to volunteer and help make this new offering a success.

Please join in by contacting Flora Parisky at flora@floraparisky.com or leave a message at 860-798-1552.

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THE SANDISFIELD LIBRARY

By Laurie Foulke-Green, Librarian

Next Genealogy Assistance Classes will be April 30 & May 28, Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m.

Call for Genealogy Requests at 258-4966, Monday and Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Or e-mail at sandisfieldlibrary@yahoo.com

NEW BOOKS

- The Weight of Blood/Laura McHugh
- The Polaris Protocol/Brad Taylor
- Power Play/Danielle Steel
- The Alpine Yeoman/Mary Daheim
- Death on the Black Heath/Anne Perry
- The Seeker: A Mystery at Walden Pond/
R.B. Chesterton
- Evening Stars/Susan Malley
- Missing You/Harlen Coben
- N.Y.P.D. RED 2/James Patterson
- E-Bay for Dummies

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TOWN BUSINESS

Submitted by Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko

Edited by Bill Price

Agendas for upcoming Select Board meetings and detailed meeting minutes are available at the Town website: www.sandisfield.info. Go to Meetings, then to Board of Selectmen. Town Selectmen are Patrick Barrett, Jeff Gray, and Rosario Messina.

Selectmen's Meeting, January 6, 2014. Postponed due to weather.

Selectmen's Meeting, January 13, reported in March issue.

Selectmen's Meeting, January 21. Postponed due to lack of quorum.

Selectmen's Meeting, January 27, 2014. Among other business, highway department update, the Paspuletti store proposal, (see page 1), and Town Administrator hours discussed.

Highway Department

Highway Superintendent Steve Harasyko presented updates on what he described as a "very busy and difficult winter." As of late January, the department had worked for 20 consecutive days plowing and sanding roads. Problems with the highway garage included the furnace exhaust leaking into the building causing the heat to be turned off, which caused the water lines to freeze preventing employees from being able to wash or freshen up.

The gate to the salt shed will be repaired. Misinformation to the public was that the gate was struck; rather, the plate holding the gate fell apart. Rosario asked about an accident that happened a few weeks ago. Steve said he always reports accidents to the chair of the board. Due to heavy wet snow, the truck slid off the road into the ditch as it came down Sears Road. There was no damage to operator or vehicle.

Dolores thanked the Highway Department for their help moving files and boxes into the storage unit. It was a bitterly cold day to work outside but the work got done.

Paspuletti store.

Kim and Chandru Paspuletti in to discuss the special permit process. The sale of the land where they want to build the convenience store hinges on the special permit approval. Jeff asked if they were prepared to submit the application,

and they responded that they needed clarification on some items.

Planning Board

Gary Bottum, Chair of the Planning Board, presented the draft of the bylaws for submission on the FY2015 warrant for the Right to Farm and revised Driveway Permit. The draft was accepted as presented. Dolores asked that the Planning Board submit it to her in a Word document format with the italics all the same. Gary agreed.

MMA Meeting and Town Salaries

Lisa discussed the MMA legislative meeting she attended. She recommended that the Selectmen attend a Legislative breakfast meeting on Feb. 28 at the Tyringham Town Hall, accompanied by Steve and the Treasurer. Discussed salaries for FY2015. We will go with 2%, with the Selectmen level funding their salaries again this year.

Town Administrator Hours

Patrick recommended looking into creating a full-time position for the Town Administrator. He feels Lisa is an excellent administrator. When we first began the process we felt part time would be sufficient, but it has become abundantly clear that there is a lot of work still to be done, e.g., the Strap Grant for Route 57. Landing a grant for that kind of project, Patrick said, would pay for the position. He felt Lisa had already proven herself in the amount of work she has already accomplished. Jeff commented that he would like to sit down with Lisa and come up with a plan first.

Other business

Jeff explained that Route 57 is the only qualified federally aided road in town. The state would like to hold a public information meeting to see if the town is interested in seeking funding for this project.

Bethany Perry expressed her concerns about the Selectmen's minutes of meetings reflecting discussions of persons that were not notified that they would be the topic of discussion.



Selectmen's Meeting, February 3. Among other business, town records storage and a proposal for a monastery on Town Hill Road were discussed.

Ralph asked about moving records from the fire station on Route 8 to the new storage facility. Dolores requested that Ralph wait until the Town Administrator has had a chance to review the records retention process, since the state may give us

permission to destroy them. Dolores also reviewed that the town does pay rent on that building and that the records only occupy a very small area.

Father Iakovos from the Metropolis of Boston Greek Orthodox Church in to present his proposal to have a monastery on property on Town Hill Road. The Church is proposing to purchase a large house on 58 acres of land. The monastery would be for men only, with no more than 12 priests living there at any time. It would be a teaching monastery, open to public interaction on certain days of the week. Town Administrator will determine how the process moves forward once they do own the property. They do not want to invest in the property before they know they will be approved. *Cont'd p.17*

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Join the Memorial Day Parade

This year's Memorial Day Parade, jointly sponsored by the Sandisfield Fire Department and the American Legion, will begin at 10 a.m., Sunday, May 25. If you'd like to march or drive your recreational ORV or your WWII-vintage Jeep, call Fire Chief Ralph Morrison at 258-4742 to let him know. Ralph and Maria Domato, Commander of American Legion Post #456, are co-chairs of the 2014 parade. Or simply join the parade formation at Old Town Hall on Silverbrook Road by 9:30. And you're welcome to simply watch the parade, rain or shine.

The parade will end at the American Legion Pavilion for a ceremony honoring veterans.

Join the Fire Department and the Legion for refreshments afterwards.

TOWN BUSINESS

Cont'd from p.16

Selectmen's minutes of meeting Feb. 10. Among other business, particular town budgets were discussed before the Board moved to Executive Session.

Reviewed budget submissions for FY2015. Dolores read each submission and allowed a question and answer period after each one. Kathy Jacobs would like the Assessors to explain their increases. Tax Collector salary will be amended to a 2% increase. The Fire Department will come in to explain their increases and review the Fire/EMS compensation program. Treasurer will be asked vendors accounts for the largest accounts. Ron Bernard will come in to review increases in the Historical Commission.

Under topics not reasonably anticipated, Mary Turek commented on the negativity of the article in the Berkshire Eagle regarding the Town Administrator. Lisa responded that they interviewed her, and she has no control over what they print.

At 8:45, motion to enter into Executive Session for the express purpose of conducting negotiations with nonunion personnel and to adjourn the regular Selectmen's immediately afterwards.



Selectmen's Meeting, February 18, 2014. Among other regular business, discussions included particular town budgets.

Reviewed FY2015 budgets. Discussed the Tree Account. John Burrows is concerned about trees on New Hartford Road since the Tree Account budget was cut by a third last year. Steve feels there is enough in the budget and doesn't want to increase it. Discussed completion of New Hartford Road. Steve responded that there should be enough in Chapter 90 to complete the road this year. Discussed highway department equipment, and he replied that he does not anticipate purchasing any new large equipment.

Discussed Machinery Maintenance. Patrick asked if it was possible to reduce the operating budget. Steve reviewed some recent repairs. The majority of the fleet of equipment is aging - backhoes and loaders are mid-1990's. Steve is uncomfortable lowering the budget and has been level funding for the whole of his term. Motion by Jeff, second by Patrick to accept the highway department budgets.

Discussed the Assessors Overlay Account and the possibility of funding the police cruiser from this account.

Discussed the Treasurer's budget, still waiting for numbers for software and insurances. The salary for the assistant is up 2%. She is working on making her salary comparable to other towns and by DOR standards. The Treasurer job is actually two, treasurer and accountant.

Motion by Patrick, second by Jeff to accept the general government budgets except Treasurer and Town Administrator.


Kathy Jacobs responded for the school budget. Sandisfield's increase is approximately \$40,000 or 2.9%. They are still negotiating the teachers' contract. No date available for the final budget number yet.

Motion by Jeff, second by Patrick to accept the budgets for the library, cemetery and veteran's budgets. Motion by Patrick, second by Jeff to accept the Police Dept. budgets pending funding for the new cruiser. Motion by Jeff, second by Patrick to accept the budgets for board of health, VNA, Brien Center, and interest for loans.

Discussed the stabilization account. John Burrows is requesting a line item which would trans-

fer from free cash to pay off items 9, 10, 11 & 12 on the stabilization spreadsheet. The town no longer owns the items except the salt shed. This would reduce the stabilization line item by \$68,000. A lengthy discussion followed. There is approximately \$600,000 in free cash and \$1 million in stabilization. Teresa. Jeff would like to forgive the items and not take it from free cash. We will review and address at the next meeting. Motion by Patrick, second by Jeff to accept the operation and maintenance budget.

Ron Bernard explained the increase in the Historical Commission budget. He explained the importance of consultant fees for historical/architectural surveys and said that he has paid for surveys for about 1/3 of the properties from the proceeds from *Sandisfield Then and Now*. He is also looking at grants. Motion by Jeff, second by Patrick to accept the budget for the Historical Commission.

Jean Atwater-Williams reviewed the Tech Committee budget. Motion by Patrick, second by Jeff to accept the Tech budget. 

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Comings and Goings



Millie and Joe, 1975

CARMELA (MILLIE) MISLEY 1924-2014

Carmela G. Misley (Millie), 89, a longtime resident of Sandisfield, passed away February 22 at the Cameron House in Lenox.

Born July 23, 1924 in the Bronx, New York, she was the daughter of Nick and Carrie Battista. One of her first jobs was at Yankee Stadium where she worked as a hostess in the Press Club. Over the years she met such players as Mickey Mantle and Joe DiMaggio, to name a few.

After her marriage to Joseph Misely in February 1975, in Bronxville, New York, she moved to Joe's home on Sandisfield Road near the intersection with West Street. Carmela and Joe opened a deli in Lee and operated it for several years. After they closed the deli, Carmela worked at the cafeteria at Fairview Hospital in Great Barrington. She became a fixture on the line, and knew everyone who passed by her station because of her warm and friendly personality.

She was active with the Sandisfield Council on Aging and for several summers hosted inner city children through the Foster Grandparents program.

Her daughter, Therese said, "She was known for her cheesecake and cookies. When she baked, she was really good." She loved searching out antiques and usually stopped at any tag sale along the road.

After her husband, Joseph, died in December 2005, Carmela moved to assisted living in Lenox. She was also predeceased by her sons, Gary M. Palazzo and John J. Palazzo.

She is survived by her daughter, Therese Palazzo, and her son, Jerry Palazzo, her grandsons, Christopher and his wife Elaina, Jesse, Jamie, Gary, Jr. and Nicholas Palazzo and her great granddaughters, Alyssa and Christina.

The funeral service was held at Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home in Great Barrington, conducted by Rev. William H. Murphey. Burial will be in the spring in Sandisfield Center Cemetery.

Donations in Carmela's memory may be made to HospiceCare in the Berkshires through Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home, 426 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230. Remembrances may be sent to the family through www.finnertyandstevens.com

OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

In March, the fourth annual Berkshire Women Writers Festival announced that **Hilde Weisert's** poem, "The Pity of It," won second prize in the festival's poetry contest. Hilde read her poem and took part in a panel discussion with other prize winners on March 29 at Centennial Hall in Pittsfield. Hilde will present her poem locally at an event sponsored by the Arts Center on September 6.



Yevgeny Kutik, a concert violinist who has performed at the Arts Center over the past several summers, was featured in a New York Times profile on March 19. Yevgeny, who grew up in the Berkshires, has been encouraged and supported for the past decade by local resident **Herb Burtis** through the Ferris Burtis Foundation. Herb said, "I continue to wish Yevgeny all the best and support him in any way I can."



Steve Harysyko, the highwayman, notes that this spring is the worse anyone can remember for frost heaves, which create potholes. Frost heaves are a combination of rain and deep cold that allows standing water to expand and shift road surfaces. While this can slow travel and possibly eliminate some need for speed enforcement, it adds to the cost of hot patches, the first of which was applied to our roads the beginning of April.



NOW HEAR THIS!

Edited by Laura Rogers-Castro.

Please send notices for Now Hear This! to calendar@sandisfieldtimes.org.

APRIL EVENTS

Nutrition/Wellness Program on Wednesday, April 9, at 11:00 a.m. at the Council on Aging, Sandisfield Town Hall Annex. Everyone, regardless of age, is invited to learn about the advantages of eating well during this free program. The invitation especially is extended to anyone in town who happens to be diabetic.

Quilting Classes with Teresa Bills, sponsored by the Council on Aging and the Sandisfield Arts Center, on Mondays through May 5, at 6:00 p.m. at the Town Hall Annex. The classes began March 31 but you may join at any time. The sessions are free!

Call for Town Caucus on Thursday, April 10, 7 p.m., Old Town Hall, 3 Silverbrook Road. There are 16 offices are open for election this year. While the time for taking out nomination papers has passed, you can also attend the Town Caucus to be nominated there to be placed on the ballot.

Historical Society reconvenes after winter break. Saturday, April 12, 11 a.m. Please attend this important first meeting of the year to help discuss and plan our events for 2014. Followed by pot luck lunch. All members of the community are invited. Call Jo Freedman, 258-4786.

Spring Fever Dinner & Celebrity Auction on Saturday, April 12, at 7:00 p.m. to benefit the Sandisfield Arts Center. A guest chef will prepare a delectable dinner served with select wines. Advanced tickets are required, \$50, and are available at the SARC website: www.sandisfieldartscenter.org. Ticket sales end on April 8.

Spring Flower Arrangement Class sponsored by the Council on Aging, Monday, April 14, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Town Hall Annex. The cost for the class is \$5.00 and all materials are provided.

Facts about the Pipeline. A special Earth Day event at the Arts Center, Saturday, April 19, 1:00 p.m. 5 Hammertown Road, Sandisfield. Representatives from Berkshire Environmental Action Team and "No Fracked Gas in Mass" will discuss the expansion of the gas pipeline across the northern section of our town. The documentary film "Gaslands" will follow the presentations. Admission: \$5. For information, call 413-679-1066.

Clam River Hike sponsored by the Berkshire Natural Resources Council on Tuesday, April 29, from 10:00 to noon. Come walk the route of the new trail on the Clam River Reserve. This 1.25-mile hike is mostly off-trail, with short sections on an existing woods road. Meet at the Town Hall Annex parking lot. For more information: www.bnrc.net/events.

APRIL EVENTS IN SURROUNDING TOWNS

Bob's Way Hike sponsored by the Berkshire Natural Resources Council on Wednesday, April 9 from 10:00 a.m. to noon. This 3-mile trail provides a great hike to view beautiful woodlands and wetlands. The pace will be easy to moderate with slight elevation changes. Meet at the Bob's Way trailhead on Route 23, just past the Otis town line. Be prepared for winter conditions. Bring water and a snack. For more information, email mleavitt@bnrc.net.

Tag Sale, Otis Ridge Ski Center parking lot, Rt. 23, May 24, Saturday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Sponsored by Otis Cultural Council. Bring your 3x6 table and sale items and join your neighbors for a profitable and social event. For application, go to www.townofotisma.com/culturalcouncil, or Otis Town Hall on Rt. 8. \$10 per table for Otis residents; \$15 all others. Send check and application to Otis Cultural Council, PO Box 237, Otis, MA 01253. (Rain date: May 25, Sunday.)

ZUMBA on Wednesdays, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., with Michelle Theilig at the Tyringham Town Hall. (\$8 drop-in fee per class). Join a friendly group of people and have fun during your workout!

Country Fair. Sponsored by Otis Library and Museum. Saturday, July 12 in Otis Center, rain or shine. This fair attracts tourists, second-home owners, residents and guests, features over 50 vendors offering crafts, food, and fun. Tables are \$35 before June 1, \$40 afterwards. Vendors please call Otis Library at (413) 269-0109.

Call for Artists: Otis Arts Festival. The Otis

Arts Festival is scheduled for Saturday, July 26. If you would like a vendor application, please visit www.townofotisma.com/culturalcouncil or Otis Town Hall. For further information, call (413) 269-4674.

Tolland Seniors Ride Program. The Tolland Council on Aging will provide rides for Tolland seniors to doctor's appointments, grocery stores, drugstores, or other necessary appointments. Call (413) 579-7834 to make an appointment.

ONGOING EVENTS

Selectmen, every Monday at 7:00 p.m., Town Hall Annex.

Farmington River Regional School District, first Monday of the month, 7 p.m., Farmington River Regional School, Rt. 8, JoAnn Austin, Superintendent. Public Welcome.

Planning Board, second Monday of the month, 6 p.m., Old Town Hall.

Board of Assessors, second Tuesday of the month, 5 p.m., Town Hall Annex.

Conservation Commission, third Tuesday of the month, 7 p.m., Town Hall Annex.

Board of Health, first Wednesday of the month, 6 p.m., Old Town Hall.

Boy Scouts, contact Western Mass Council of Boy Scouts for a local troop at 413 418-4002.

Council on Aging, every Wednesday, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Senior Center, Town Hall Annex. Pot luck lunch at noon, bingo at 1 p.m. Free blood pressure screening every fourth Wednesday.

Finance Committee, second Wednesday of the month, 7 p.m., Sandisfield Library. Public welcome.

Historical Commission: Third Wednesday of the month, 7-8:30 p.m., Sandisfield Library.

PTO, second Thursday of the month, 3:15 p.m., Farmington River Regional School. Child Care provided.

Sandisfield Public Library Hours: Monday and Tuesday, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.; Wednesday, 6:30-8:30 p.m.; Thursday, 2-5 p.m., Saturday, 9 a.m.-12 noon. Call ahead at 258-4966.

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